

Withdrawal from Iran deal draws ire from Vt. delegation

By ELIZABETH HEWITT
VTDigger

WASHINGTON — Vermont's delegation sharply criticized President Donald Trump's decision Tuesday to withdraw from an agreement brokered by the Obama administration to halt Iran's nuclear program.

The president has been a consistent critic of the deal for years, and it was a frequent punching bag at his campaign rallies during the 2016 campaign. However, since taking office, he has so far upheld the deal.

That changed Tuesday. In a televised address, Trump formalized his decision to withdraw, saying that the deal is ineffective.

"If I allowed this deal to stand, there would soon be a nuclear arms race in the Middle East," the president said.

He bashed the agreement, a signature foreign policy achievement of the Obama administration, as failing to meet its objectives.

"It didn't bring calm, it didn't bring peace, and it never will," he said.

Trump announced Tuesday that his administration would begin instituting "the highest level" of economic sanctions, suggesting that any other country that does business with Iran would be subject to sanctions as well.

"America will not be held hostage to nuclear blackmail," Trump said.

All three members of

Vermont's delegation were sharply critical of Trump's decision.

Administration officials contacted senior members of Congress in the hours before the president's announcement to alert them to the decision.

One official attempted to contact Sen. Patrick Leahy, D-Vt., early Tuesday afternoon.

As Leahy left the room where Senate Democrats caucus every week, he commented he would return the phone call later in the afternoon, after a committee hearing — though by that time news reports suggested Trump had made up his mind.

Leahy, speaking softly, said he believes the country should keep its word, "not break it a year or two later."

In a statement, Leahy later called Trump's decision a "monumental mistake" and charged the president is "fulfilling a dangerous campaign promise that puts politics over the security of the American people and our closest allies."

Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., responded to the president's announcement in a polished seven-minute video address broadcast live on his Facebook page.

Standing at a podium with an image of the Capitol dome visible through a curtain behind him, Sanders argued withdrawing from the agreement will be damaging to relations in the Middle East,

and will undermine future diplomatic endeavors, such as the Trump administration's attempt to negotiate with North Korea.

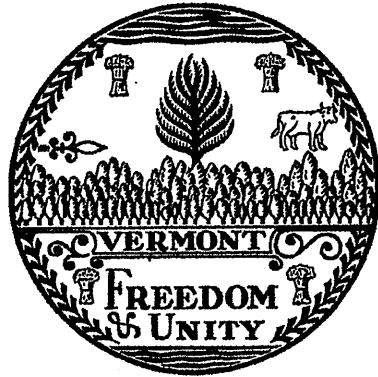
"Why would any country in the world sign such an agreement with the United States and make the necessary concessions if they thought that a reckless president might simply discard that agreement a few years later?" Sanders said.

The war in Iraq, Sanders said, was the result of years of policy decisions over the years before the 2003 invasion, and, he asserted, the situation with Iran is in part a result of that conflict.

"It is folly to imagine that having unleashed these problems through the misuse of military force that we can solve them in the same way," he said.

Rep. Peter Welch, D-Vt., who as a Democratic whip helped gather support for the measure to pass in the House, praised the "carefully-negotiated" deal as imposing stringent requirements on Iran.

"By carelessly casting it aside, President Trump has manufactured an international crisis that risks an armed conflict with a nuclear Iran," Welch said. "In doing so, he thumbed his nose at the grave warnings of our allies and ignored assurances by senior military officials and independent inspectors that Iran is, in fact, in compliance with the terms of the agreement."



Articles of Interest

Vermont

Analysis casts doubt on Scott's school plan

April McCullum
Burlington Free Press
USA TODAY NETWORK

MONTPELIER - A new non-partisan analysis of Gov. Phil Scott's education finance plan argues that it's based on dubious assumptions and pointed out "major technical errors" in the administration's long-term projections.

The Department of Taxes corrected some of those technical errors Tuesday afternoon in response to the Joint Fiscal Office's critique.

The analysis is likely to weaken the governor's negotiating position with a Democratic majority that was already skeptical of the proposal.

The governor has insisted that lawmakers use \$58 million in one-time money to avoid an education property tax rate increase in the coming fiscal year. His plan purports to recoup that money and millions more by implementing a package of policy changes over five years.

"I think there's some big problems here," said Rep. David Sharpe, D-Bristol, after listening to the analysis in the House Committee on Ways and Means.

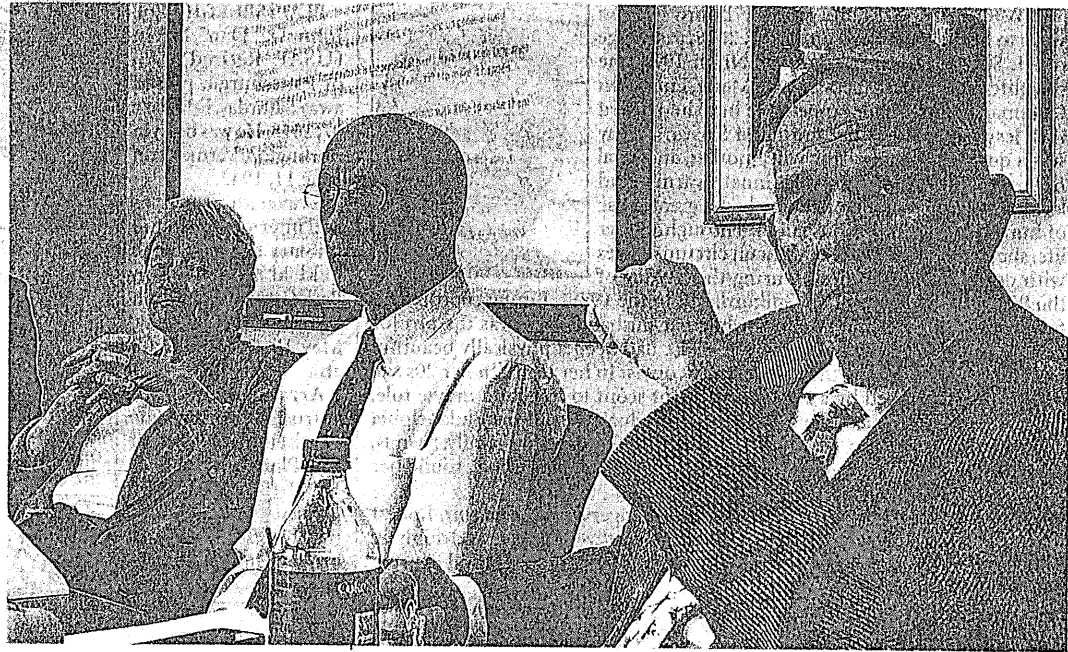
Some of the problems pointed out by the Joint Fiscal Office were technical: The analysis argued that the Scott administration double-counted special education savings, overestimated savings from a statewide school employee health plan, and did not fill reserves.

Other questions relate to the certainty of the projected savings.

"Savings are critical to this proposal, but are built on assumptions with little to make them likely or achievable," fiscal analysts wrote.

The Joint Fiscal Office argues, for example, that the Scott administration is banking on savings from staff reductions without a mechanism to make the reductions happen.

The Scott administration argues that staff reductions will happen naturally through Act 46 district mergers and as staff members retire or resign. The Scott plan would create a task force to encourage a greater student-to-staff ratio across the state. There would also be a greater tax penalty for school districts that spend more per student than the



Mark Perrault, center, of the Vermont Legislature's Joint Fiscal Office presented an analysis of Gov. Phil Scott's education finance plan at the House Committee on Ways and Means on Tuesday. PHOTOS BY APRIL MCCULLUM/FREE PRESS

state average.

The Joint Fiscal Office also questioned other parts of the proposal:

■ The Scott administration is projecting that education spending will grow by about 2.2 percent. The JFO believes the number is closer to 2.7 percent.

■ The JFO questions the projected savings from a statewide school employee health insurance plan.

In an interview Tuesday, Scott administration officials stood by their savings projections and characterized the the Joint Fiscal Office analysis as "faulty."

"They're taking the tack that anything they can't positively, absolutely verify won't happen," said Adam Greshin, commissioner of finance and management.

The Scott administration argues that Democratic leaders have been unwilling to discuss avoiding a tax increase.

"At the end of the day, if the Legislature want to quibble with how much money we have over the next five years to reinvest in a quality education and to lower rates, we're happy to have that discussion," said Jason Gibbs, the governor's chief of staff. "But first, they have to agree that they share our goal of avoiding a \$58 million property tax increase this year and setting the education finance system on a stable, level trajectory."

Scott's tax commissioner, Kaj Samson, is expected to testify Wednesday at the House Committee on Ways and Means to clarify the administration's calculations.

Contact April McCullum at 802-660-1863 or amccullum@freepressmedia.com. Follow her on Twitter at @April_McCullum.



Gov. Phil Scott Gov. Phil Scott speaks to reporters at the Statehouse in Montpelier on March 13.

Single-payer movement focuses on primary care

By PETER HIRSCHFELD
VERMONT PUBLIC RADIO

It's been more than three years since then-Gov. Peter Shumlin abandoned his pledge to create a universal health care system in Vermont, but advocates are working this session to reignite the embers of the single-payer flame.

On a Tuesday evening in late January, around 50 Vermonters showed up for a public hearing on the floor of the Vermont House of Representatives.

The topic was Senate Bill

53 — an act relating to universal coverage for primary care services.

Each person was allotted three minutes to say their piece; it was not the first time Millard Cox had done this.

"So here we are again," Cox told the House and Senate health care committees. "I don't know how many times I've been here. But we come back every year, asking for a different, more humane, more rational health care system."

Like most of the people in the room that night, Cox

supports a universal, publicly funded health care system for Vermont — something akin to the single-payer framework used in most other developed countries.

Even proponents of single-payer say that likely isn't happening anytime soon in Vermont, but a number of key lawmakers have thrown their weight behind what could be called "single-payer light."

S.53 is a bill that would commit the state down a path toward universal primary care. Cox told lawmakers in January to seize the

opportunity to pass it.

"And take us to a system in which health care is considered a universal human right and a public good," Cox said.

According to a 2015 study by the state, universal primary care would cost about \$200 million a year, assuming providers are paid at the rates they get now.

S.53 directs the state to develop a program framework, come up with a tax to fund it and to institute universal primary care beginning in 2019.

Dr. Deb Richter, a practicing physician and leader of

the single-payer movement, said the bill would allow every person in Vermont to see a primary care doctor of their choosing, free of charge. She said it's a good place to start.

"Because primary care is really where you go to find out whether something is serious or not. ... And certainly, I have had patients who have actually died as a result of avoiding care," Richter said.

Richter said even insured Vermonters avoid care because they can't afford their co-pays and deductibles.

That's the case for Patricia Reid, who urged lawmakers to pass universal primary care at the public hearing back in January.

"Although I currently carry private health insurance, I do not access care when I need it due to financial barriers," Reid said. "It does not have to be this way. With universal publicly financed primary care, we would reduce the need for expensive hospitalizations and emergency room visits by preventing disease and treating conditions earlier."

Vt. OKs new consumer protections

By DAVID JORDAN

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

MONTPELIER — Vermont lawmakers Tuesday celebrated the passage of a bill that limits corporations and employers from forcing arbitration agreements on consumers and workers.

The bill that received final approval Tuesday targets contract terms that lawmakers say place an unfair burden on those seeking legal remedies, but opponents say the bill could place an undue burden on certain businesses.

Backers of the bill held a news conference shortly after the final approval of the bill.

"The five common terms that we've defined as unconscionable in this bill are already largely considered unenforceable by courts, yet they continue to appear in contracts," said Rep. Selene Colburn, a Progressive from Burlington. Colburn added that these terms often have the effect of silencing consumers and workers.

Ski resorts and other recreation groups expressed concern with the language of the bill, saying that if guests could not sign an enforceable release the resorts would be exposed to additional financial risk.

"Cost of doing business would increase, which will drive recreational businesses and events out of Vermont or out of business entirely," wrote Vermont

Ski Association President Molly Mahar in a letter to the House Judiciary Committee last month.

Democratic Sen. Jeanette White pointed to arbitration agreements in one employment clause that required any sexual harassment to be reported within six hours of the incident.

The objectionable terms the bill targets includes requiring that disputes be

adjudicated out of state, limiting the statute of limitations; prohibiting an individual's right to seek remedies or punitive damages provided by the court; and requiring an individual to pay fees to file a claim.

The lawmakers highlighted Vermont's rural population while explaining the bill, saying that many consumers do not have multiple options

when signing up for cell-phone or internet service.

The bill included a reference to an existing Vermont statute that says participants assume the risk of a physical activity. The sponsors said this move carved out an exemption for recreation groups.

Republican Gov. Phil Scott has not indicated whether he will sign the bill.

Planned Parenthood Sues Trump-Pence Administration

Title X Serves 7,800 Patients Annually in Vermont

✓NDE 518

Colchester, VT — On Wednesday, three Planned Parenthood affiliates filed a lawsuit in federal district court in Washington, D.C. against the Trump-Pence administration to fight for the four million people who depend on Title X, the nation's only program for affordable birth control and reproductive health care.

Title X, in place since 1970, is meant to ensure that every person — regardless of where they live, how much money they make, what their background is, or whether or not they have health insurance — has access to basic, preventive reproductive health care, such as birth control, cancer screenings, STI testing and treatment, and regular check-ups. Many of the people who rely on it may not even know it exists, but without it they wouldn't be able to access this essential care.

Changes to the Title X program would be one of the most large-scale and dangerous attacks on women's rights and reproductive health in this country. Nationally, Planned Parenthood health centers serve 41 percent of the patients who get care through Title

X — yet the Trump-Pence administration's efforts are designed to block those patients from coming to Planned Parenthood health centers. This would mean many are left with nowhere else to turn. The administrations also wants to "gag" any Title X provider, including hospitals, from sharing information about or even mentioning the word abortion.

In Vermont, Title X makes a significant difference in health outcomes, serving 7,800 women annually. Without Title X-funded family planning services in Vermont, unintended adolescent pregnancies would be 139% higher, and unintended pregnancy and abortion would be 127% higher*. (*Source: Guttmacher Institute).

Statement by Meagan Gallagher, CEO and President of Planned Parenthood of Northern New England: "Today, the U.S. is at a 30-year low for unintended pregnancies and an all-time low for pregnancies among teenagers. That is due in large part to increased access to highly effective contraceptive methods and sex education. We

cannot risk undoing that progress. Taking away access to the full range of birth control options is a significant and dangerous shift in Title X policy. We are going to fight for our patients' health and rights to control their own bodies and future, and to get the care they need."

Since taking office, President Donald Trump and Vice President Mike Pence have pushed policies to take away basic rights and health care. They have:

- Issued a rule to allow employers to deny birth control coverage to their employees;
- Ended protections for sexual assault survivors on campus;
- Tried to eliminate the Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program;
- Tried repeatedly to block women from getting care at Planned Parenthood.

In February, the Trump-Pence administration began trying to completely remake the Title X program through a call for funding applications, changing the program so that it no longer focuses on either birth con-

trol or reproductive health care and instead pushes patients toward abstinence and tries to keep patients from coming to Planned Parenthood. Not only is this illegal, but it could have devastating consequences and threaten health care for millions.

The suit was filed by Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin, Planned Parenthood of Greater Ohio, and Planned Parenthood Association of Utah in federal district court in Washington, D.C., and alleges that the dramatic changes HHS is making to the Title X program through its funding announcement are illegal because they are contrary to the Title X statute and regulations, which make clear that Title X is meant to provide comprehensive, evidence-based contraception and reproductive health services. The plaintiffs are asking the court to block the illegal funding announcement and continue Title X patients' current access to care. The plaintiffs are represented by attorneys from WilmerHale and Planned Parenthood Federation of America.

Prescription drug take back day yields huge success

✓SAM,
5/8,
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MONTPELIER, Vt. — Vermonters turned in more than three tons of unused, unwanted and expired medication at nearly 70 collection sites across the state on National Prescription Drug Take Back Day this past Saturday, April 28.

The 6,008 pounds of collected prescription medication marked the highest total in Vermont for the six Take Back Days since fall 2015.

"As we continue to combat our opioid epidemic through prevention, treatment, recovery and enforcement initiatives, removing unused opioid medications from distribution is incredibly important and a key prevention strategy," said Governor Phil Scott. "I want to thank Vermonters for their continued help in getting Vermont's most dangerous leftovers off the street, as well as the Vermont Departments of Health and Public Safety, and local law enforcement for their work to collect and safely dispose of these unused medications."

Take Back Day is organized in partnership with the Health Department, local and state law enforcement and the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration to help ensure prescription drugs that people are no lon-

ger using don't wind up being misused. As part of Saturday's event, communities across the state played host to collection sites where people could safely and anonymously drop off unused medications. Local and state police, and county sheriff departments staffed the locations.

Studies show that 42 to 71 percent of prescribed opioids go unused. The DEA estimates that about 10 percent of the medication collected on Prescription Drug Take Back Day are opioids.

"The start of drug misuse is often a matter of opportunity," said Health Commissioner Mark Levine, MD. "We know that people who abuse prescription painkillers can readily get them from friends or family — often straight out of the medicine cabinet," Dr. Levine explained. "The fact that literally tons of drugs were collected makes it clear that Take Back Days and our permanent drop-off sites around the state make a difference in keeping drugs out of the wrong hands, and are disposed of in a way that won't pollute our waterways or injure wildlife."

"Vermonters stepped up on Take Back Day," Department of Public Safety Commissioner Thomas D. Anderson said.

"Thanks to their efforts, and the work of health and law enforcement professionals, a record amount of dangerous leftover prescription drugs, including opioid painkillers, were removed from people's medicine cabinets."

Here's a look at how much medication was turned in during the previous six Prescription Drug Take Back Days:

- April 2018: 6,008 pounds.
- October 2017: 6,007.1 pounds.
- April 2017: 5,552.9 pounds.
- October 2016: 3,934.4 pounds.
- April 2016: 5,094.4 pounds.
- September 2015: 5,800.4 pounds.

The collected medication is securely transported out of state and incinerated.

Don't worry if you missed Take Back Day — Vermonters have other options. The Health Department coordinates a system of permanent prescription drug disposal sites, such as at pharmacies and police stations where disposal boxes or kiosks are in areas open to the community. To find a permanent drug disposal site near you, visit health-vermont.gov/drugtakeback or dial 2-1-1.



ROBERT LAYMAN / STAFF FILE PHOTO
Jack Sawyer, left, talks with defense attorneys Marshall Pahl and Kelly Green on April 25 in Rutland criminal court.

Vt. passes terror law after Sawyer incident

By PATRICK MCARDLE
STAFF WRITER

A bill written in response to an alleged plot to commit a school shooting at Fair Haven Union High School has been approved by both houses of the Legislature and will be sent to the governor for his signature.

The domestic terrorism

bill will make it a crime to take "substantial steps" to "threaten any civilian population with mass destruction, mass killings or kidnappings." Jack Sawyer, 18, of Poughkeepsie, was arrested in February for allegedly planning a school shooting in which police said he hoped to cause "mass casualties."

The bill passed the House and the Senate on Monday. If it becomes law, a person convicted of the charge could be sentenced to up to 20 years in jail.

Attempts to reach John Bloomer, secretary of the Senate, to find out when the

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Law

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bill would be sent to Gov. Phil Scott for his signature were unsuccessful. A call to Scott's office was not returned on Tuesday.

The need for new legislation was raised after Sawyer was arrested and charged with four felonies — three counts of attempted murder and attempted aggravated assault.

Police seized a journal kept by Sawyer which allegedly described his plans to kill students at Fair Haven, where he had once been a student, and the school resource officer, the only person standing in the way.

Judge Thomas Zonay ordered Sawyer held without bail, but a three-member panel of Vermont Supreme



FILE PHOTO
The Vermont Legislature finalized a domestic terrorism law this week. Now it goes to Gov. Phil Scott for a signature.

Court overturned that decision, finding that Sawyer had not taken any action to commit an act of violence.

The felony charges were also dismissed by Rutland County State's Attorney Rose Kennedy, leaving Sawyer facing only two misdemeanor charges, criminal threatening

and carrying a weapon with the intent of harming another. The misdemeanor charges were added later.

Sawyer has since been released from jail on \$10,000 bail.

Rep. Maxine Grad, D-Moretown, chairwoman of the House Judiciary Committee,

said the new law, if signed by Scott, would be another tool prosecutors could use if faced with a similar incident.

"We recognize we live in a very challenging world these days and this bill recognizes that there are events that can put a community in terror — really terrorize a community," Grad said.

The Legislature's initial response to the Sawyer incident was divided. The Senate Judiciary Committee worked on the domestic terrorism bill while their counterparts in the House looked at updating the state statutes regarding attempting to commit a crime, or what was often called, "attempt" laws.

Sen. Dick Sears, D-Bennington, chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, said there was language in a separate bill that would direct the Vermont Sentencing

Commission to look at the attempt laws.

Sears said legislators wanted to create a law quickly and changing the attempt laws was expected to take longer than the time that remained in the legislative session to do so effectively.

Fair Haven students and faculty visited Montpelier last month to share their concerns about Sawyer being released from prison.

"When they talked about feeling like sitting duck, that really hit home for me," Sears said.

Grad also had a chance to talk to the students and teachers. She said legislators want to hear from Vermonters like them who had been "deeply touched" by an incident.

"I was glad to be able to hear from them, especially the students," she said. "They were very courageous and

very courageous to come on what was supposed to be their vacation when they should be having fun."

Sears said the students and teacher brought a very sobering message.

"They talked about needing a change in the attempt law, but what they were really talking about was having felt terrorized by Jack Sawyer and his behavior," Sears said. "They were disappointed. Felt like the (Vermont) Supreme Court, the justice system and the Legislature had let them down."

The domestic terrorism bill, if it becomes law, could help restore that trust. Sears said state senators and representatives had created a bill that included some of the strongest part of both proposals.

"I'm very happy and I'm looking forward to the governor signing it," he said.

Nipped in the Bud

For noncitizen immigrants, marijuana legalization does not apply

BY KYMELYA SARI



The law is not equal for everyone when it comes to marijuana possession. That's the message immigration lawyer Erin Jacobsen is sharing with Vermonters before adult possession and consumption of recreational marijuana becomes legal on July 1.

"Because marijuana is still a controlled substance, and immigration is governed by federal law, it doesn't really matter what the states are doing about marijuana," said Jacobsen, assistant professor and supervising attorney at Vermont Law School's South Royalton Legal Clinic.

Using, possessing and selling marijuana or being involved in the marijuana industry could have negative immigration consequences for non-U.S. citizens, Jacobsen said. They risk not being readmitted into the country, having their green card or citizenship application rejected, losing a U.S. visa, or deportation. "It's really crucial that people understand what's at stake for noncitizens," said Jacobsen.



Erin Jacobsen

is: Don't use marijuana or work in a place that sells marijuana until you're a U.S. citizen.

The attorney is among those from the legal, social services and advocacy communities who are concerned about the ramifications that the new marijuana law may have on noncitizens and new

immigrants. In 2015, there were 28,247 immigrants in Vermont, comprising 4.5 percent of the state's population, according to the Washington D.C.-based American Immigration Council. Of that number, about 55 percent were naturalized citizens.

Jacobsen's warning came after U.S. Attorney General Jeff Sessions in January rescinded an Obama-era policy of noninterference. The change allows federal prosecutors to decide on a case-by-case basis how to respond to marijuana enforcement in states where it's legal. But two months later, national media outlets quoted Sessions as saying, "Federal prosecutors haven't been working small marijuana cases before, [and] they are not going to be working them now."

U.S. District Attorney for Vermont Christina Nolan said in an interview with Vermont Public Radio in April that her office has "a lot of leeway to determine how to deploy our limited resources in a way that makes sense in our state." One of her

priorities is tackling the opioid crisis and related violence. Jay Diaz, staff attorney for the American Civil Liberties Union of Vermont, wrote in an email that he hopes Nolan's "willingness to respect and reflect Vermonters' fierce independence and clear priorities" will hold.

Jacobsen, however, maintains that the situation is still worrisome. The U.S. Department of Justice and the White House, she said, have consistently expressed "extreme views about crime and punishment," and they are "actively implementing harsh law enforcement policies."

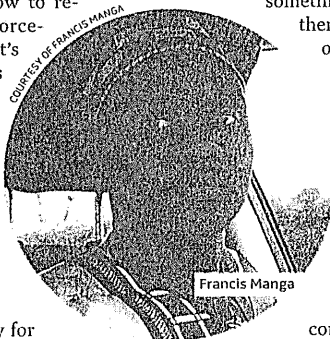
One doesn't have to be convicted of a marijuana-related charge in order to face immigration consequences, according to Jacobsen. Federal border patrol agents can operate immigration checkpoints within 100 miles of any U.S. border; almost all of Vermont lies within that range.

"They could stop you and ask you anything and do a search," said Jacobsen.

"If they find anything, or you say something that indicates to them that you're using or trafficking drugs, you're in trouble."

Even having a marijuana sticker on one's car or a photograph in a cell-phone could be grounds for inadmissibility, she continued.

Jacobsen is also concerned that the population most vulnerable to "the disproportionate consequences," she said, are the ones most likely to be on the receiving end of increased police attention. The immigrant students she met at the



Francis Manga

**CANNABIS
ISSUE**

As a panelist at the student-organized Know Your Rights March workshop in Burlington for youth of color, Jacobsen spoke about the citizenship process in general. She also distributed flyers that explain how marijuana-related convictions could affect one's immigration status. Her No. 1 advice for noncitizens

information session in March told her that they face greater law enforcement scrutiny because they're black.

Though underage possession of marijuana will still be illegal under the new law, Francis Manga is wary that misunderstandings persist, especially among families that are relatively new to the U.S. He's a youth program specialist at the Association of Africans Living in Vermont, a nonprofit that provides social services to refugees and immigrants.

It's important that service providers, the state and law enforcement officers bring awareness to parents who don't speak English, Manga said. Some families have expressed concerns that their children are using drugs, he noted.

"My son is using a white powder. I don't know what it is," said Manga, recounting stories he's heard. Some of the noncitizen youths he's engaged with are "excited" about the upcoming legalization, but they don't know about the immigration consequences and "think it's OK for everybody" to have marijuana.

"They have friends who are citizens, and if their friends possess [marijuana], they will be influenced [to use it]," Manga said.

The Burlington School District Parent University has been educating parents on substance use since 2015 with support from Burlington-based Spectrum Youth & Family Services. Many of the parents who signed up for Parent University are relative newcomers to the U.S. who want to learn about the school district and its culture, said program manager Ali Dieng.

Michael Hill Jr., former coordinator of Spectrum's Multicultural Youth Program, led two information sessions on the use of marijuana, alcohol and tobacco for Parent University. The presentations helped those new to the country understand the "subtle realities" within American culture and its "contradictions," he said. It's "very confusing" for newcomers to be told not to use substances, yet at the same time they're exposed to advertising for them, Hill said.

The parents weren't passive learners, he observed. With the help of interpreters, they sought advice on how to broach the topic of substance use with their children, as well as where and how to get help.



WE WANT TO MAKE SURE WE DON'T LEAVE ANYBODY BEHIND.

ALI DIENG

Dieng, who's also a city councilor (D/P-Ward 7), plans to include more workshops on substance use and the opioid crisis in Parent University's curriculum next year. "We want to make sure we don't leave anybody behind," he said.

But Dieng is also cognizant of the program's limited reach. Parent University can only accommodate about 60 parents from the school district per year. "The Vermont Department of Health, in coordination with New American community leaders, hospitals, faith-based organizations, schools [and] community agencies will need to develop translated outreach messages [and] materials and [make] presentations to New American community groups," he said. ⑦

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INFO

Learn more about the South Royalton Legal Clinic services at vermontlaw.edu and Parent University at bsdvt.org.

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Vt announces quarantine of Invasive Emerald Ash Borer

Response focuses on slowing the spread to protect forest health

Courtesy of Vermont Agency of Natural Resources

MONTPELIER - As part of the ongoing response to the recent discovery of the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) within the state, Vermont has joined the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)'s 31-state quarantine boundary. The quarantine will help reduce the movement of infested ash wood to un-infested regions outside of Vermont's borders. Ash wood may not be moved from Vermont to Maine, Rhode Island, or seven counties in New Hampshire because the pest has not been identified in these states and counties. Vermont will be directing avail-

able resources to protect state forest health by providing Vermonters with low-risk options for use and disposal of wood that is already infested.

"The areas where EAB has already been found in Vermont pose the greatest risk to the health of our forests," says Vermont Forests, Parks and Recreation Commissioner Michael Snyder. "Based on science and our learning from strategies used in other states, we are choosing to focus on outreach and education in a collaborative approach

to seriously limit further spread of the insect within Vermont."

Vermont is developing a series of slow-the-spread recommendations, initially including recommendations for handling logs, firewood, and other ash materials. Examples of these first recommendations include:

Limiting movement of ash material to locations within the infested area,

Transporting logs during EAB's dormant period,

Chipping infested materials so EAB cannot

survive.

As a first step in communicating the recommendations, the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation is contacting people who work in Vermont's forest economy to provide information about where ash trees are likely to be infested, and how to best handle and transport material from those areas.

The State of Vermont already has a firewood quarantine in place to help prevent the introduction of damaging forest pests by prohibit-

ing untreated firewood from entering the state. This firewood quarantine remains in effect.

In 16 years since first being detected in Michigan, EAB has been discovered in 31 additional states. To learn more about these recommendations, to see a map indicating where EAB is known to occur in

Vermont, and to report suspected invasive species like EAB, visit vtinvasives.org. Vermonters are also encouraged to familiarize themselves with the signs and symptoms of EAB and keep an eye out for the beetle. Report suspicious findings on vtinvasives.org.

Program that studies Lake Champlain qualifies for up to \$1M

Wilson Ring
ASSOCIATED PRESS

MONTPELIER — Two decades after the diminutive Lake Champlain was ridiculed for its brief listing in federal law as one of the Great Lakes, a program that studies the lake has won a designation that could more than double its government funding — up to \$1 million annually. The National Oceanic and Atmos-

pheric Administration has announced that the Lake Champlain Sea Grant Program has qualified as an "institute," which could boost its federal funding 150 percent, from \$400,000 annually to \$1 million a year. The money will be used to help scientists understand and clean up the lake.

The Lake Champlain program earned the designation "by demonstrating excellence in research, education and pub-

lic service," NOAA said.

The program "has clearly shown a high level of achievement," said Craig McLean, assistant administrator of NOAA Research.

U.S. Sen. Patrick Leahy cleared the path for the new designation in 1998, when he gave Lake Champlain official designation as one of the Great Lakes in a bill providing federal research money for the lakes. It was listed alongside lakes

Ontario, Erie, Huron, Michigan and Superior despite being dwarfed by each and located in a different region of the country.

The narrow, 120-mile long lake is located between Vermont and upstate New York with a tiny portion reaching into Quebec, Canada. The Great Lakes border eight U.S. states, most in the Midwest.

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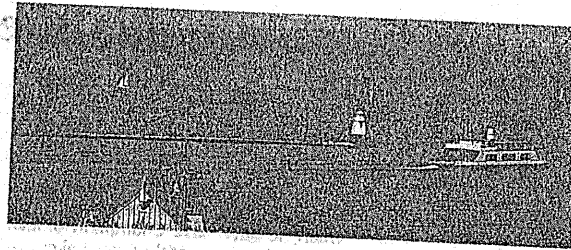
Champlain

Continued from Page 9A

and Ontario, Canada. They cover an area of 94,250 square miles.

A Page 1 headline in the Detroit News and Free Press read, "Great Lakes get a little brother; now there are 6. Pond in Vermont wins status battle." Former Ohio U.S. Rep. Steve LaTourette mocked: "If Lake Champlain ends up as a Great Lake, I propose we rename it 'Lake Plain Sham.'"

The listing lasted slightly less than two months. While Lake Champlain is no longer considered one of the Great Lakes, the research designation that came with the listing remained. And Leahy takes the credit for that.



Sail boats and a passenger ferry dot Lake Champlain in 2015 as seen from Battery Park in Burlington.
WILSON RING/
AP FILE

"He took the heat for that, but it allowed us to establish the Lake Champlain Sea Grant program here," said University of Vermont Professor Breck Bowden, who heads the Lake Champlain program.

While Lake Champlain is a fraction of the size of the Great Lakes, scientists who focus on the larger lakes can learn

from the smaller lake, said Greg Boyer, director of the Great Lakes Research Consortium, which includes 18 colleges and universities in New York and nine in Canada.

In many ways Lake Champlain is more complex than some its larger relatives, said Boyer, who called Lake Erie, for ex-

ample, "a very big mud puddle."

"I can see logic on both sides; it really isn't the same size as the Great Lakes. It's more like a very large Finger Lake," Boyer said, referring to the 11 lakes in western New York.

The Lake Champlain program was founded in 1999 as a "project" of the National Sea Grant College Program, which was established in 1966 to help maintain a healthy coastal environment and economy.

The Lake Champlain program is a cooperative effort by the University of Vermont and the State University of New York College at Plattsburgh. The extra funding will allow the program to expand to New York, offer educational program for middle and high school students and expand partnerships with state and private organizations.

✓ CR, 5/9, A2

NEWS BRIEFS

Thousands pick up litter Saturday during Green Up Day

MONTPELIER, Vt. (AP) — Thousands of Vermonters are out picking up trash from the landscape during the state's annual Green Up Day.

The event on Saturday happens each year on the first Saturday in May.

Green Up Day was started statewide in 1970 by then-Gov. Deane Davis when the interstates were closed so volunteers could pick up trash.

Now communities organize cleanups, with trash bags and litter drop off locations. Some also offer a community lunch afterward.

Organizers say more than 22,000 volunteers take part in the largest statewide volunteer event in the state.

THE LAST SEVEN DAYS

COMPILED BY SASHA GOLDSTEIN, MATTHEW ROY & ANDREA SUOZZO

WEEK IN REVIEW

MAY 2-9, 2018

P.S.

Left to right: Hawa Adam, Kiran Waqar, Balkisa Omar and Lena Ginawi

COURTESY OF KIRAN WAQAR

POETIC IN JUSTICE?

The slam poetry group Muslim Girls Making Change was invited to headline an event last week at the Elks Lodge on North Avenue in Burlington — where a club officer promptly called the cops on them.

The four young women, local high school seniors who perform publicly to promote social justice, arrived early for the annual meeting and banquet hosted by an organization called Women of UVM. The teens told *Seven Days* reporter Kymelya Sari that they were kidding around outside the building before their appearance.

"We were just talking a little bit, giggling ... average volume of four teenage girls," said member Kiran Waqar. They were excited about their upcoming July trip to Minnesota, where they will join Michelle Obama and Colin Kaepernick in receiving awards from the National Education Association for their work in promoting human and civil rights. The quartet is also performing in Friday's Voices for Change conference at Burlington City Hall Auditorium.

Lodge secretary Moe Decelles said the girls were disrupting the Women of UVM's annual meeting, which had already begun.

"So, I said, 'I'll go out and talk to them,'" he told deputy news editor Sasha Goldstein Tuesday. Decelles said he didn't realize they were part of the program. "I said to them, 'OK, girls, you've got to move on. You're distracting

the people inside the building who are participating in this meeting."

He added, "And every one of them started saying, 'Why do we have to go?' Whatever it was, they were all talking at the same time, so I really couldn't understand them that well. So I said, 'Listen, you've gotta go. I just called the cops and told them you guys were doing drugs.'"

Responding to a call about "disruptive youths," the police arrived to discover the girls were guest speakers at the event.

MGMC believe it was racial profiling. "This kind of stuff happens all the time, and we're sick of it," Waqar said.

The foursome stayed through dinner and performed their poems. Poet Balkisa Omar said she teared up during "Wake Up America," a poem about racism and Islamophobia.

Decelles said he apologized to the girls but also that the incident had been blown out of proportion.

"I could care if they were green, red or blue! It didn't matter to me," Decelles said. "They were disturbing the function. It had nothing to do with racial profiling. What kind of bullshit's that? That wouldn't even enter my thought process."

Read the full story by Goldstein and Sari at sevendaysvt.com.